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THE TWO SAMURAI

BYRON E. VEATCH

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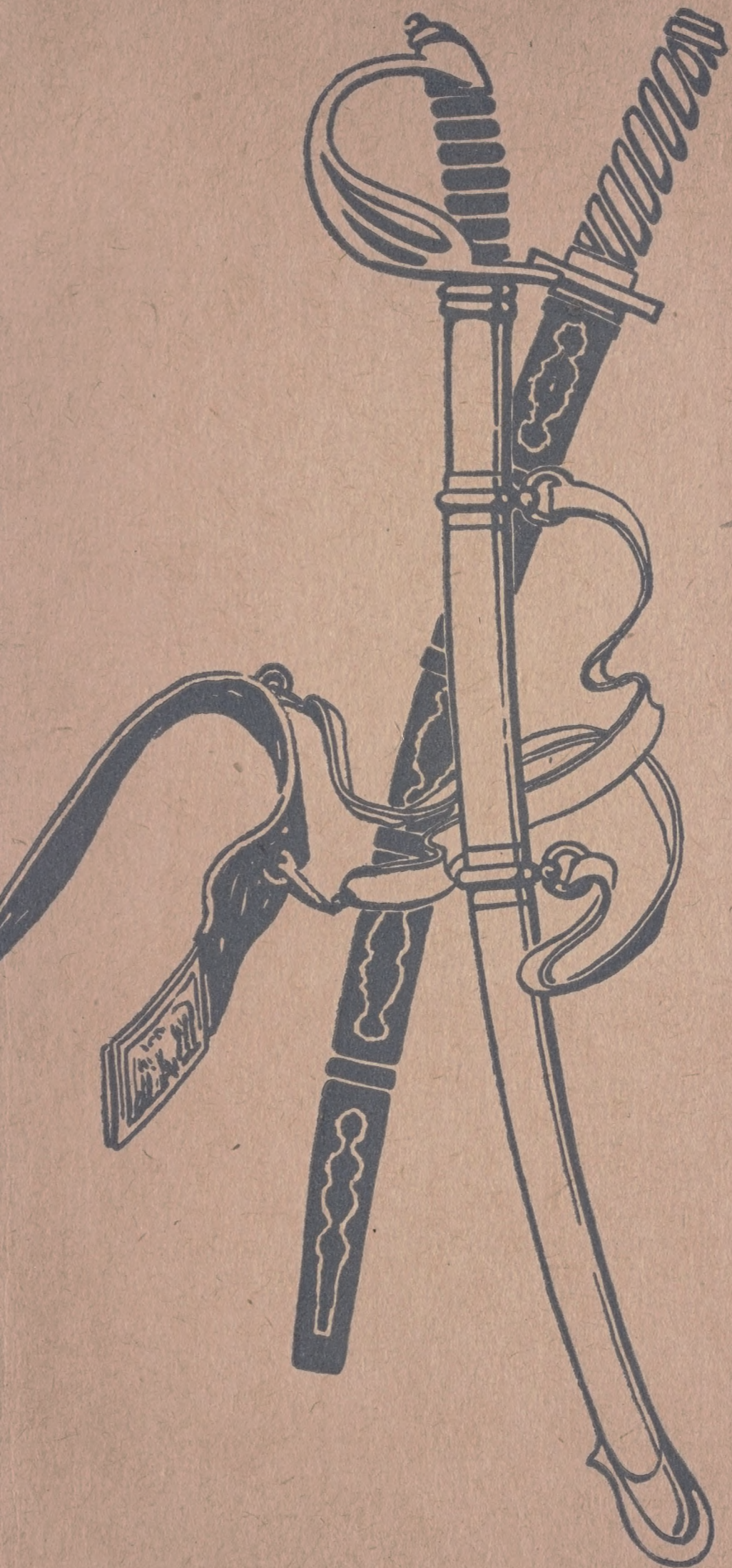

THE TWO SAMURAI

IN *front stood Sammy and Reynolds, directly between the Indians and the woman*

[PAGE 33]

The Two Samurai

By

Byron & Veatch

Author of

"Men Who Dared"

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THE TWO SAMURAI

IT was in the autumn of 1904 that the Colonel told the story; Colonel M——, who, with his seventy years, his snowy hair and imperial, was yet as ruddy of cheek and as gallant of bearing as when in the old days he led the ——th Cavalry through the deserts of the West. Since his retirement his home was at the Army and Navy Club, where his charming little dinners and his unfailing wit and eloquence as an after-dinner speaker made this courtly old warrior the most sought for man about the capital.

We had dined with the Colonel that evening, and as we entered the club smoking-rooms we overheard fragments of an animated conversation between two naval officers, who were debating the probable movements of the United States battleship squadron in case the feud between Japan and Russia should involve other nations. The relative strength of the Japanese and Russian navies, both as to material and personnel, was also under discussion. In support of some claim as to Japanese superiority, one of the navy men took up an encyclopedia, from which he read the following:

"'*Samurai* — A term designating the feudal or governing class of old Japan; the ruling families from which the fighting clans were organized; a fighting man.'"

We found seats in the farther corner of the room and, after a few moments of silence, the Colonel remarked, in the musing tone which always promised a story:

"Boys, I once knew a Samurai; two of them, in fact; one to the manner born, the other a Samurai by adoption."

"Unlimber and get your range, Colonel, we are ready," remarked Sanderson of the Artillery, who would talk shop.

The old man smiled indulgently, and settling himself deeper into the big leather chair, replied:

"Well, then, if you youngsters really care to listen, and will allow an old fellow to tell his tale in his own fashion, you shall hear of the Samurai I have mentioned, two of the bravest men I ever met, and I have known several.

"At the close of the rebellion, after being mustered out as captain in the Tenth New York Cavalry, I re-entered the service as a lieutenant in the Fourth Regulars, and was at once ordered to Fort Sill. This was in '65, and for the next fifteen years we earned every dollar Uncle Sam paid us, and incidentally rode our horses over some millions of square miles of his territory, between the Brazos

and the Big Horn. It was scout and fight, winter and summer; no big affairs, you understand, but a row of some sort going all the while, for the Indians were ugly and required lots of licking to keep them on their reservations. April 5, 1880, I was transferred to the ——th Cavalry, and, as ranking captain, assumed command of Fort Huachuca, Arizona, a three-company post only a few miles from the Sonora border.

"It was a favorite pastime of the reds, for small parties of a dozen or twenty, to break from the reservation at night and, after raising sundry and divers varieties of hell, to slip across the border and take refuge in Mexico, sneaking back to their tepees after the flurry of pursuit was over.

"It was the first day after I assumed command that I took my own troop out on the parade-ground, put them through their paces, and gave them a thorough looking-over, to see what sort of an aggregation I had inherited. They were a rollicking lot of lads, not pretty to look at, but comfortable fellows to have at one's back when going into a scrimmage, as I learned upon more than one bitter day in the months that followed. After a few evolutions I felt, rather than saw, what they needed: they wanted a master; wanted a leader whose word should be to them the law and the gospel, from Proverbs to Revelations, and by Gad,

sir, they found their man right there and then. Half of them didn't seem to know how to obey a command, and the other half didn't appear to be in any particular hurry. My subalterns, too, were apathetic, and inside of ten minutes I knew that my work was cut out for me, if I expected to make anything of Troop C.

"The only man in the company who seemed to know the game, and wanted to play it by the book, was the First Sergeant. I spotted him at once, and noticed that he not only understood and instantly obeyed a command, but that he mentally anticipated it, which showed me that he was letter-perfect in tactics.

"I didn't waste a great deal of time in letting them know the lay of the land. As they wheeled into line by fours, the order was 'Halt, Company front!' and then, riding very slowly, I passed down the line, and over the head of his motionless horse I looked squarely through each trooper's eyes and down into the subcellar of his immortal soul. At the end of that slow riding I knew my men, and they knew that I knew them.

"From that moment began the upbuilding of Company C, and before six pay-days had passed it was the best drilled, best natured, hardest fighting troop that ever swung the saber or followed the guidon.

"As the Company broke ranks I could see that the men were speaking eagerly

among themselves, evidently discussing their new 'Old Man.' I had my eye on that First Sergeant, and after stables that evening I sent an orderly for him. A few minutes later he strode up to the open door of my quarters, saluted and stood at attention, waiting while I looked him over from end to end. He was a soldierly-looking chap, square-shouldered, well set up, long of limb and slender, and looked as hard as iron. But it was at his face that I looked longest. It was not a happy face — some great sorrow or great disappointment had left its shadow there — but it had character written all over. Prominent cheek-bones, a good nose and chin, with deep-set gray eyes, that looked at a man, not past him. For a full minute he stood quietly returning my gaze, with never a flinch nor the tremor of an eyelid.

"'What's your name, Sergeant?'

"'Reynolds, sir.'

"'How long have you been in the service?'

"'Nearly three years, sir.'

"'Step inside, Sergeant, I want to have a talk with you.'

"As he passed the threshold he removed his hat, and right there his Captain came very nearly committing an unpardonable breach of discipline, for the impulse came over me to get out of my chair and offer the gentleman a seat. For Sergeant Reynolds was a gentleman, as one could

see the instant his hat came off and that magnificent forehead appeared in evidence. His was a splendid head, and every line of his face and brow bore the unmistakable stamp of intellectual force and honesty of purpose. Why was such a man as this serving as a private soldier in the regular army? I was distinctly rattled for a minute, and in the little silence which ensued I found myself speculating as to what queer turn of Fate's fickle wheel had brought him there. Such cases were not infrequent, and many an interesting identity lay concealed under Uncle Sam's army blue.

"Whatever had been his past, I felt sure he was the one man in the company who could be of most assistance in bringing the troop up to concert pitch, so I went straight to the point:

"'Sergeant, Troop C requires some good, hard drill and better discipline. The men need a little ginger and soldierly spirit infused into them, and a man in the ranks, who has his heart in the work, can prove himself of invaluable assistance to his officers in bringing about the desired conditions. I had an eye on you this afternoon and, if I am not mistaken, you know your business. Your Captain is going to depend on you to help him round the troop into shape, and, willingly or unwillingly, you're going to give him that help. I sent for you to tell you this and to know whether you will do it

because you want to, or because you have to.'

"Quick as a shot came his reply, 'Both, sir.'

"There was a faint smile on his lip and a pleased look in his eyes which told me that my First Sergeant was mine. I dismissed him without further questioning, for I felt intuitively that no casual inquiry would secure Sergeant Reynolds' real history, much as I wanted it. A few minutes' private and pointed conversation with each of my lieutenants that evening, and I was ready for the siege of drill which began the following day. Lord! How I did work those fellows for the next week or two! The men grumbled and kicked, as is the soldier's prerogative, but they worked. Hennessy, the biggest, brawniest trooper of the lot, probably voiced the general sentiment, when one hot afternoon he unburdened himself to Reynolds.

"'What do yez make av it, Sargint? Is this a rest cure that the dear Captin is thryin' on us? Bedad, I'd raythe be diggin' post holes in the stony corner of hell than workin' as a hoss sojer unther that man! Sure, me liver is jolted loose and the seat of me panties is wored out entoirely with this ridin' and chargin' up and down the landscape from mornin' till night. I've dhrilled and dhrilled till the dam thing has gone to me head, and I find meself dhrillin' in me slape. There's

wan good thing about it, thank Hivin, the ould divil is takin' his own medicine, for he's dhrillin' wid us.'

"And so it was. I took my share of the drudgery, but it paid, for the troop began immediately to show improvement. Reynolds' influence in the ranks was soon apparent, the men showing more and more interest as the days went by.

"One evening an ambulance from Benson brought in the long delayed mails, and as the leathern pouches were tumbled out the men gathered about, eager for news from the San Carlos Agency, where a break was rumored. On the seat beside the driver sat a young man in civilian dress, unmistakably a foreigner.

"'Who's your friend, Bill?' sang out one of the crowd.

"'Recruity,' answered the driver, with a grin; 'a gent from Japan who is stuck on sojerin' and has come out here to get some.'

"A delighted yell came from the boys, as they closed in and began reaching for the newcomer.

"'If the lady wud put her fut in me hand, I'd be proud to assist her to land in Huachuca,' said Hennessy, as he grabbed the stranger by the coat collar.

"The little fellow laughed at the reception, and without an instant's hesitation stepped into Hennessy's hand, then to his shoulder, and, springing lightly over

the surprised trooper's head, landed safely on his feet. It was neatly done, and his evident good nature caught the crowd.

"'Bully for the Mikado!' 'Hooray for the Jap!' chorused the men, as Hennessy, nowise abashed, took the newcomer by the arm and moved off toward the quarters. Several others, scenting a lark, hurried forward to take a hand, but Hennessy waved them off. 'Lave go,' he said, 'I saw it first.'

"I beckoned the driver to me and inquired concerning the stranger.

"'Don't know nuthin' about him, sir, 'cept he tackled me as I was leaving Benson, and finally made me understand he wanted to come here; offered me a five-dollar gold piece to let him ride, and here he is. Says he wants to learn to be a 'Merican sojer, but he don't savvy United States, not a little bit.'

"I turned to Reynolds, who stood near, telling him to give the Japanese something to eat and then bring him to my quarters. It would never do to leave him with that lot of unredeemed pagans who had him in tow, as they would haze him mercilessly. I mentally decided that he would be sent back to Benson by the ambulance returning next morning.

"An hour later I saw Reynolds and the Jap coming up the company street, the little fellow trotting along beside the tall trooper, talking excitedly and smiling as if thoroughly delighted with the situa-

tion. As they reached my verandah, Reynolds saluted and said, 'Here he is, sir.'

"'Who is he, and why is he here?' I asked.

"'Izo Yamato, sir; been in America only a few weeks, and came from San Francisco here to enlist. Says he wants to be a cavalryman. He is twenty-three years old, and belongs to a distinguished family.'

"'How comes it that he has been able to tell you so much? I understood from the driver that he speaks little or no English.'

"'He speaks very little English, sir; his conversation with me was in his own language.'

"'In Japanese? Where in God's name did you learn Japanese?'

"'I lived in Kobe for several years, sir.'

"'Um! well, you understand, of course, that he cannot enlist here. He must first go to some recruiting station and pass an examination, which he couldn't do, both on account of his size and his lack of English. Take care of him tonight, Reynolds, and we will send him back to Benson tomorrow.'

"All this time the Jap had not once taken his eyes from my face, eagerly watching every movement and gesture I made. Suddenly, as he seemed to understand that I had refused his request, he

stepped before me, and drawing himself up to his full height, he declared proudly, 'Me Samurai.'

"I looked at Reynolds for an explanation.

"'He says he is a Samurai, sir, which, translated into English, means that he is a fighting man.'

"I laughed outright, while the smile on the little Jap's face broadened perceptibly, as he spoke a half dozen quick, snappy sentences in Japanese to Reynolds.

"'He says he doesn't expect to draw pay, sir; he has ample funds, and only wants to learn American soldiering.'

"I couldn't do anything for him in that line, and told Reynolds so. A quick shadow of disappointment passed over the youngster's face, as Reynolds translated my words, and I really felt sorry for him. He was a handsome little chap, about five feet four, deep-chested, stocky, and muscular, a sort of a big little man, when one came to look him over. He had jet-black hair, laughing eyes, and, while his features were of course after the Oriental type, he really looked more like a Portuguese or some south Europe breed than a Japanese. After some further talk I dismissed them, fully determined to send him out of camp the following morning — but he didn't go.

"Just before taps Reynolds came to me again to ask that his new friend be permitted to remain at the post for a

time, explaining that the Jap would furnish his own equipment, and that the government would be reimbursed for the rations he consumed. He urged the case so strongly that I finally inquired what personal interest he had in the matter. At first he seemed loath to explain, but it finally came out.

"'Frankly, sir, I want his society. I haven't a real friend in the troop; of course, I get on well enough with the boys, but they are an illiterate lot, and it's fearfully lonely here at times, having no one to talk with. Young Yamato is an educated gentleman, and it would afford me infinite pleasure to have him with me, to teach him and to have him as my friend.'

"'But the men will devil the life out of him, and you will have a constant fight on your hands if you propose to protect your friend.'

"'I don't think they will trouble him much, as they come to know him better, sir, and he will require no protection.'

"'Why, Reynolds, that big Hennessy has already marked him as his victim. He will surely haze the life out of the little cuss.'

"'That's Yamato's affair, sir. I trust you will permit him to remain at the post; if he can't stand the gaff, then he will leave.'

"'Reynolds, I want to ask you some questions altogether foreign to the sub-

ject in hand; questions you needn't answer unless you see fit. You are a man of education and refinement; you know more about matters military than a man in your station is supposed to know; you are more familiar than your officers with the latest text-books on tactics. Were you ever at the Point? How came you to be a private in the service? What is your history, anyway?'

"It was brutal, the manner in which I fired those questions at him, taking a mean advantage of his position as petitioner to pry into his private life. I was ashamed of it as I put the questions; I was more ashamed when his answer came.

"Quickly the color rose to his cheek, then gradually receded, leaving him deadly pale, as he slowly replied.

"'Captain, the rehearsal of a most unfortunate and unhappy history could not in any manner be of interest or profit to you. I have never been at West Point, and my training has been more naval than military. I am here because it appears to be the best place for me, and while here I have tried to perform my duties faithfully. That's all I care to say, sir, and I trust you will respect my reticence.' The gray eyes were looking fearlessly into mine.

"It was a merited rebuke, delivered like a gentleman.

"'Right, Sergeant, your history is your

own property. You may keep the Jap, and if you need a friend, come to me.'

"There was a suspicious brightness in his eyes and the faintest tremor in his voice as he wrung my proffered hand, saying, 'Thank you, Captain, I'll not forget this.'

"So Yamato remained at the post, the ward and pupil of Sergeant Reynolds. The men attempted some horse-play with him the first day or two, but as Reynolds let it be known that the Jap was his friend, no one cared to carry the fun-making beyond prudent limits. They were very curious, however, and asked the Sergeant all sorts of questions concerning his protégé, to which they received evasive but good-natured replies. Big Hennessy finally cornered the Jap, and proceeded to catechize him.

"'How ould are yez, Chink?'

"'Me have of the years twenty-three,' replied the lad, with his everlasting smile.

"'Twinty-three! Sure, 'tis a big boy ye are gettin' to be; if yez kape on growin' at the prisint rate, yez will be a full-grown man in thirty or forty years more,' and the Irishman guffawed uproariously.

"'Well, me big man, what did yez do for a livin' in the ould counthry? Did yez wheel the baby waggin and do other light dhry-nursin', or was ye head push in a laundhry?'

"Not understanding, the Jap shook his head.

"Hennessy tried again.

"'What business were yez in? What did ye work at?'

"Extending himself to his full height, with great dignity the Japanese replied:

"'Me no work; in my countree me gentleman; me Samurai.'

"'Samoory, eh? What particular sort av a bug is a Samoory, anyhow?'

"'Him no bug; Samurai ees one man of the fight.'

"'Whoop!' yelled the big trooper derisively; then raising his voice till he could be heard from end to end of the company street, he shouted,

"'Oyez! Oyez! all ye fighters come a-runnin' with yure hats in yure hands, and do riverince to a rale live Samoory from the Far East.'

"Then as the boys quickly gathered about, he made a profound obeisance before the surprised Jap, and resumed.

"'Gintlemen, dhrunkards, short-card min, and sojers! 'Tis me pleasure to inthrojuce to yez me distinguished frind and contimporary, Mister Samoory, av Japan, who has confidentially imparted to me the information that in his own counthry he was known as a fighter from way back, a hell of a feller, so to spake; and be rayson of his ability as an all-roun' scrapper, the King gave him the title of "Sammy, the Fightin' Man." All mim-

bers of Troop C will now take warnin'! Yez will plaze kape off the grass when Mister Sammy is awake. Hospital accommodations will be provided for them as forgit themselves. Form in line now, ye divils, and extind the right hand of fellowship to Mister Sammy, who has thraveled all the way to Americky to be showin' us the fine points av the game.'

"The Jap looked puzzled, but as those overgrown children lined up, each in turn extending his hand, the smile broadened and the black eyes fairly beamed with pleasure. This ceremony ended, the boys gave three rousing cheers for 'Sammy, the Fighting Man,' the fun was over, and henceforth he was 'Sammy' to one and all.

"When Reynolds returned later in the day, Sammy delightedly told him of Hennessy's kindness and the great honor conferred upon him by Troop C. Reynolds did not disillusion the boy, but, later on, quietly told the men that while they might guy the Jap and have fun with him, it would not be wise to carry it too far. They assumed by this warning that Reynolds would resent any undue imposition upon his friend; not once did it occur to them that Sammy was amply able to care for himself. Their enlightenment was yet to come.

"Sammy's fitting out and equipment furnished no end of fun for the men. He wanted everything necessary to a ''Meri-

can Soldier of the Horse,' and, as he was amply supplied with gold, he soon had his tent, blankets, and weapons. From some unknown source the boys dug out an old, rusty cavalry saber, which he hailed with evident delight and which he at once proceeded to scour and polish till it shone like silver. Then he ground and whetted and sharpened the old blade till it was keen as a razor. In vain the men explained that the laws of war prohibited a sharpened sword. 'Me want him for cut,' was his only reply, as he went on whetting till the old steel would have split a hair. Then he took his saber to the blacksmith and requested that he file off the basket, or hand-guard, leaving a plain, straight, unprotected hilt. 'Me like him better; same like in my countree,' he explained.

"It was in securing a horse that he had greatest difficulty. Not being an enlisted man, he could not be permitted to use a government mount, nor could he purchase a horse from Uncle Sam. After a private conversation with Mexican Joe, the proprietor of one of the low groggeries just outside the lines, Mr. Hennessy announced that he had heard of a fine saddle horse for sale by a Greaser a few miles down the valley, and, if his friend Sammy so desired, the horse should be brought up to cantonments on the morrow. Next day a Mexican led a piebald, white-eyed broncho into camp, and

within five minutes departed hurriedly with fifty dollars of Sammy's gold in his pocket. It was a bay and white pinto which Sammy had acquired; round-bodied, long-barreled, with flat, muscular legs and a depth of lung space indicating great staying power, but with a Roman nose and the restless white eyes which told unmistakably of a 'spoiled' saddle horse. Evil lurked in every movement of the slender, pointed ears, and looked boldly out through those wicked eyes. He was one of those untamed and unbreakable specimens of horseflesh occasionally found in the great West.

"'Come, min,' said Hennessy briskly, 'lay hold and help the gintleman to mount his new calico horse,' and taking the rawhide lariat in his hand, he advanced toward the pinto's head to adjust the bridle; then leaping suddenly back, as the brute's teeth snapped together dangerously near his arm, he swung overhead the bridle with its heavy bit, landing it with considerable force between the white eyes.

"'Whoa! ye murdherin' divil, have ye no sinse of dacincy? 'Tis yure new masther, the fightin' man av Japan, who is to ride yez!'

"A dozen willing hands assisted in getting the bridle and saddle in place; then Sammy, who probably had not been astride a horse a dozen times in his life, stepped forward and clambered into the saddle.

"'All set!' shouted Hennessy, as Sammy took up the reins; 'lave go! the Arizony circus will now begin!'

"Begin it did; for no sooner was the maddened brute released than he lunged wildly into the air, alighting with a sickening jolt upon his forefeet, while his hinder part shot skyward. Sammy's hat flew in one direction and his six-shooter in another, as he clutched frantically at the saddle and endeavored to recover the stirrups which were sailing about his ears. First to the right, then to the left pitched the horse, the men yelling in sheer delight, 'Stick to him, Sammy!' 'Go it, Calico!' etc. It lasted less than ten seconds, during which time Sammy was all over that pinto horse, traveling from end to end with each sudden unseating; first behind the saddle, then in front of it; clinging desperately first to one side and then the other, as Calico swayed to and fro, like a drunken ship, in the effort to discharge his shifting ballast. The rider had lost the reins, and the horse, without guide or hindrance, his head far down between his forefeet, his back bowed into a squirming knot of muscle, landed with a particularly vicious jolt that shot Sammy into the air, where he somersaulted to a landing in a bunch of bristly soapweed, the breath completely jarred out of him.

"For a half-minute he lay still, and then as the laughing soldiers gathered

about, he slowly straightened up and started toward the pinto, who stood with ears perked forward, suspiciously eyeing his fallen rider. The boy was badly shaken; a thin line of blood from his nose showed red on his white lips, as he unsteadily grasped the rope and warily edged his way to the horse's head. Once within reach his right hand clamped the panting nostrils, while his left gripped an ear; there was a quick, downward pull, an inward push, a sudden upward twist, and Calico lay floundering on the ground with Sammy sitting on his head.

"So quickly was it accomplished not a man of them could have told how it had been done. Sammy was smiling again, as he sat quietly till the beast ceased its struggles; then, getting up, he allowed Calico to scramble to his feet. The white eyes were blazing now and the horse swung his head and squealed angrily as the Jap moved in. Again that iron grip upon nose and ear, the sudden pushing twist, and once more the horse fell heavily, his hoofs impotently threshing the air.

"Twice more the pinto was permitted to rise, and twice more he was ruthlessly thrown, the last time that awful grip holding to his nose till poor Calico was well-nigh dead for want of breath. When Sammy arose the fourth time the horse lay still, and it required a vigorous kick to bring him to his feet, his legs trembling

unsteadily beneath him, and for the first time in his life those white eyes showed abject fear. Sammy walked straight to his head, patted the dusty neck, put the reins over, then deliberately and awkwardly climbed into the saddle and rode slowly down the street. Calico was licked! Licked to a finish! You should have heard the boys cheer the little Jap as he rode back a few minutes later.

"Reynolds had seen it all, yet no word escaped him till after the horse had been stabled; then he patted Sammy on the shoulder and spoke a few words in Japanese, which caused the boy's face to light up with satisfaction and his hand to seek Reynolds' with a quick grip.

"The two were inseparable; and under Reynolds' careful tutoring Sammy made rapid progress in English, though some words he never did get straight. He learned to ride, too. When the men were at drill he watched every evolution, listened to every order. He begged so hard, and seemed so anxious to learn, that I finally allowed him in the ranks, a soldier serving without hope of pay or preferment, but as gallant a soldier as ever drew rein, as you shall hear later on.

"He got on famously with the men. Of course, they guyed and chaffed him, all of which he accepted good-naturedly, so long as they kept hands off. He would permit no one to hustle him or indulge in any horse-play. One of the men

attempted to manhandle him one day, when Sammy grappled with the fellow and threw him over his shoulder so violently as nearly to break the man's neck. After that they respected his edict of 'hands off.' His thirst for knowledge seemed insatiable. Like a shadow he followed Reynolds; ever his eager questions, sometimes in English, more often in Japanese, as to *why* or *how*, receiving the tall trooper's reply in kind. It was about three weeks after his arrival that Sammy had his first trouble, which came about in this wise.

"Hennessy, who was a roistering, good-natured fellow when sober, but a quarrelsome brute when in his cups, had spent the afternoon at Mexican Joe's dive, and returning to camp in the evening, was fighting drunk and hankering for trouble.

"It so happened that the tent occupied by Sammy stood at one end of the adobe building in which Hennessy bunked, and the latter, to reach his door, must pass within a few feet of the little Jap, who sat cross-legged on the ground at the open flap of his tent, tinkering at his equipment. Some evil spirit prompted the drunken Irishman to bait the Japanese, for he stopped, and with an ugly leer commanded the boy to get up and get him a cup, as he proposed to initiate all stray Orientals about the camp into the mysteries of American tanglefoot.

"'Get up, ye sawed-off haythen, and

bring me the cup, before I spit and dhrown yez.'

"Sammy smiled and went on fixing his buckle.

"'Didn't yez hear me, ye naygur? I've a mind to take on a body sarvint in me ould age, and as yure so dam purty and so smilin'-like, yez have been elected by a most overwhelmin' majority as striker to the Honorable Tim Hinnissy, and I'll start yez in proper by fillin' yez up on this,' and he swung the bottle dangerously near Sammy's head.

"Still smiling, Sammy shook his head. 'No want him, those drink; him make for me pain of the head.'

"Hennessy scowled angrily.

" 'Don't want it, don't yez? Well, 'tis time ye were larnin' that whin yure boss gives ye an ordther ye are to move, and not sit squattin' like a cross-legged toad, argifying. Git up, now, or I'll kick a hole through the basement of yure pants!' and he touched the lad none too gently with the toe of his boot.

"Sammy looked surprised, but still shook his head and smiled.

" 'No want him, those drink; no geet up.'

"Hennessy's big foot swung back, then forward, as he landed a vicious kick squarely amidships; Sammy rolled over, without doubt the most surprised and the maddest Japanese in the Western Hemisphere. He sprang to his feet, his

eyes ablaze, but as Hennessy raised his foot for another kick, Sammy ducked under the tent flap and disappeared within.

"Hennessy howled derisively and stepped forward with the evident intention of following, but just then his head rocked backward from an awful smash dealt him by the youngster, who stepped out of the tent and faced the furious Irishman. It was the hilt of that old cavalry saber which had halted Mr. Hennessy's advance. Full and square in his teeth the blow had landed, and as he spat the blood and a couple of floating teeth from between his lacerated lips, he yelled, 'Ye son of a scutt! ye wud play wid the tools, wud yez?' He sprang into the open door of his own quarters, snatched up his saber, and, leaping out, sent the scabbard clattering to the earth as he strode toward the waiting Jap, who seemed to have forgotten his anger and was now smiling expectantly.

"The blow had instantly sobered the big trooper, but it had also wakened the devil in him, and it was evident to the men who ran flocking to the scene that Hennessy meant to hurt the boy, possibly to kill him.

"'Now, ye haythen toad, I'll show yez how to use the business end av a cheese knife! I'll just slice off wan ear as a sooveneer an' then I'll spank yez with the flat av me blade; but if ye are nasty

about it, by God, I'll take the two av thim,' and with this he made a vicious cut at Sammy's head, the blow slipping harmlessly from the waiting steel.

"Two of the men started to rush Hennessy from the rear to prevent a killing, but Reynolds interfered, saying, 'Let him alone; this isn't your fight.'

"'But Hennessy 's crazy drunk and will kill him!'

"'I don't think so,' calmly replied Reynolds. 'Hennessy will presently see a great light, and, if I mistake not, will be a very sober man when he finishes his job.'

"And it was so. For the first few moments Sammy seemed content to parry the strokes which were rained upon him with all the strength and fury of the enraged Irishman. So furiously did Hennessy press home his attack, and so steadfastly did the little Jap hold his ground, that again and again the blades were engaged up to the very hilt, and it seemed that Sammy's unguarded sword-hand must surely suffer; but each time a deft turn of the wrist put aside the danger. The boy's enigmatical smile, and the ease with which he parried each savage cut and thrust, seemed to drive the big trooper wild, for with a fierce oath he redoubled his effort and sought by sheer weight to break down his adversary's guard.

"Then Sammy's tactics changed, and

within ten seconds the spellbound men realized, as did Hennessy, that with all his bulk and strength the big fellow was but as a child, absolutely at the mercy of that smiling, youthful foe, while the sword-play which followed was the talk of many a camp-fire in the years that followed.

"Stepping back a pace, the Japanese suddenly set his saber whirling in a peculiar wheel-like movement, which opposed a circular shield of steel to Hennessy's weapon. Swifter and swifter whirled that shining thing, its sibilant hiss growing more and more venomous, menacing, and deadly. Utterly confounded, Hennessy paused, his sword-arm extended, too dumbfounded to give ground or to drop his point. Suddenly the guardless saber shot out, and, engaging the Irishman's blade, tore it from his hand and sent it flying over the heads of the crowd, to fall harmlessly fifty feet away. Then, as his arms dropped limply, the gray of a great fear stole over Hennessy's face, not the fear of a coward, but the fear of a brave man who looks into the eyes of a death he cannot parry, — while that silent serpent of steel darted through his hair, between ear and skull, first on one side, then the other; passed like lightning within a hairbreadth of his jugular; then under each armpit, or flicked a button from the bosom of his shirt, as if seeking the most deadly spot to place its fatal sting. Yet no harm

came to the Irishman; not one drop of blood did he lose.

"In a minute it was ended. Sammy swung his saber upward and brought it down flat-side, landing with a sounding whack just above Hennessy's left ear, knocking all the sense out of him for five minutes. Turning to Reynolds, the boy laughingly said, 'Me no hurt him; him no Samurai; him big boy, not know how for make those fight.' Then he sat down before his tent and resumed the repairs on his buckle.

"That settled it. Sammy had made good as a fighting man, and from that day he was the idol of the Company. Hennessy was thoroughly whipped, and, like a real man, he knew it and bore no malice. After an hour he emerged from his quarters, and walking up to the Jap, grasped his hand.

"'Sammy, yure the boss. God knows ye should av kilt me for the dhirty cur that I was, but ye didn't, and I'm yure frind. If yez want a striker to clane yure horse, or to be doin' yure maynial wurruk, it's meself that's lookin' for the job, for ye are the biggest man I iver hooked up wid, if ye are put up in a small bundle.'

"Sammy's smile broadened, as he warmly shook the Irishman's hand.

"'Hennessy one fine boy, when he no make of those drink; it is good for be friends.'

"Hennessy spent ten days in the guardhouse for his drunken folly, and it was Sammy who regularly carried to him tidbits from his own mess.

"We had enjoyed a season of comparative quiet, but the long expected break came early in July. The entire Apache nation, which had for months been seething with unrest, now broke into open revolt with the usual campaign of murder and pillage.

"At dusk one evening a courier, who had ridden seventy miles since noon, brought orders from the Colonel to intercept a war party of seventy or eighty Tontos, who were reported raiding up the San Simeon Valley, bound for Sonora. Company F, at Fort Bowie, would cut them off from the outlet at the upper end of the valley, when it was supposed the reds would swing to the westward and, skirting the hills, would cross the Divide at or near Dragoon Summit and make for the Mexican border through the foothills to the west of Dos Cabesos. By hard riding it might be possible to intercept them at Hanging Rock Springs, a favorite camping-place for such expeditions.

"Hurried preparations were made, and at three o'clock next morning Troop C filed out from cantonments on its long ride. As men and horses were fresh, we rapidly put mile after mile behind us in the cool morning hours. A hurried break-

fast as the sun came up from behind the distant Dragoons, and then began the dreary ride across the desolate stretch of hill and plain which lay between us and Hanging Rock, the point at which I hoped to bag our game. Mile after mile we jogged under the blazing Arizona sun, the rear of the little column hidden in the blinding alkali dust, which rose in clouds from the dry, parched earth. Far to the front, with the flankers, rode Reynolds, and with him Sammy, who had entered upon this man-hunt with all the enthusiasm of a boy.

"At noon we halted for an hour, to rest the horses and eat our slender ration; then on we pushed across the barren wastes toward our destination. At mid-afternoon the heat became terrific, the horses suffering severely and many of them beginning to show evidences of the twelve-hours' stretch. Hanging Rock, fifteen miles away, was now in plain view across the valley, but it began to be questionable whether the command could reach it before dusk, and it would be most imprudent to scale the hill and enter that rocky den after the sun had gone down.

"Nature, in a freakish mood, had pushed the long shelf of rock out from the summit of the divide, and most strange it was that there, high up above the plain, should bubble forth from beneath the hanging scarp of stone, a great spring of clear, cool water. The ridge was a

wilderness of giant boulders, a jungle of ragged rocks, thick strewn, as if scattered by some Titan hand in the far-off days when earth was young.

"Suddenly the left flankers, a half mile in advance, drew up, and Reynolds' signal told me that something unusual was beyond. A moment later we saw a single horseman emerge from one of the numerous blind cañons on the left and ride rapidly toward the waiting soldiers. Reaching them he seemed to confer for a moment, then Reynolds wheeled and dashed back toward the column, waving his hat and shouting some unintelligible message. As I rode forward to meet the flying horseman, his white face warned me of evil tidings.

"'Captain, a scout from Fort Grant says that the Colonel's wife and his two little children, with a detail of six men, left Grant at noon, to meet the Colonel at Huachuca; two hours after they left the post, news of the break reached the camp, and Captain Dunlap sent this scout after the Colonel's wife to bring her back. He ran into a band of Apaches who were following the trail of the ambulance, and he thinks they will overtake it at Hanging Rock. Unable to warn the detail, and with another band of Indians between him and Grant, he cut around and was making for Huachuca when he spied us.'

"God! It was fifteen miles to Hanging

Rock, and even now the little detail might be surrounded. And a woman, too! It meant swift action; so, turning to the command, I told the men the situation, explaining that the lives of our Colonel's wife and children, and of the six troopers, depended upon our reaching Hanging Rock before the reds could complete their devilish work. As many of the horses were exhausted, it would depend upon those who had the best mounts to make the rescue, so I ordered each man to do his best and started the entire troop upon a free-for-all run for the Rock. Within ten minutes Company C was strung out for a mile across the desert, the better horses forging to the front, the weaker falling to the rear.

"Fortunately, my horse was in fair condition and carried me well to the front. I rode hard, but far in advance of all raced Reynolds' big bay and Sammy's pinto. An hour, which seemed an eternity, had passed, when less than a score of troopers reached the foot of the ridge a mile from the spring. As one after another of the horses dropped back exhausted, I wondered how many would be with me at the finish, and if we should be in time.

"Suddenly from the heights above came the far-away bang of a Springfield, then another, while the faint puff of rifle smoke floating from the summit told us that the Tontos were at work. Up the slope we went as rapidly as the reeking

horses would carry us; far to the front, now disappearing behind the rocks, rode Reynolds and Sammy. The reports of the Springfields came ever clearer to us as we toiled up the rocky slope, and now and again we heard the exultant yells of the savages as they pressed their attack.

"A quarter of a mile from the spring my horse wavered, then stumbled and fell, unable to carry me another rod. Snatching my pistols from the holsters, I ran on, hoping against hope that we might be in time. A louder chorus of savage yells and a popping of the Colts told me that Reynolds and Sammy had reached the scene. Breathless with the uphill run, I finally turned a giant boulder, and the little amphitheater about the spring was spread out before me.

"To the rear of the water hole stood an ambulance, the mules all down; just behind the spring, and cowering against the overhanging rock, was the Colonel's wife, with her helpless little ones; while lying about were five motionless figures in faded army blue, which told the story of brave men who had battled to the last and had died the soldier's death. Beside the praying woman knelt a wounded trooper, calmly shooting into the horde of savage figures who were darting and dodging amidst the rocks; while to the left and in front stood Sammy and Reynolds, their Colts spitting viciously at the Indians, who were evidently sur-

prised and disturbed by the unwelcome re-enforcements. The men were directly between the Indians and the woman, and as the savages hoped to capture the latter alive they were not using their guns, but had attacked the Jap and his comrade with knives and war clubs.

"As I looked, the wounded man went down, and, casting aside their empty weapons, Reynolds and Sammy drew their sabers and stood between the kneeling woman and the two score of yelping beasts. A moment later Reynolds toppled backward from a murderous thrust in the side and a blow from a war club upon the head, delivered simultaneously, and Sammy was alone, confronting that swarm of naked cut-throats. A half-dozen of my men now came running up the trail, and in an instant their Springfields were roaring as they pressed forward, shooting, and shouting encouragement to the boy.

"And then, startlingly clear and vibrant, above the din of the yelling savages, above the shouts of the men and the banging of the Springfields, rose in a foreign tongue a strange, weird chant, full and sonorous as a trumpet-call. It was the battle song of the Samurai, — Sammy's answering challenge, — the war-cry of his fathers. About him shimmered and hissed that impenetrable circle of steel, and though they hacked and stabbed in frantic haste, not once did a hostile

thrust reach beyond that matchless guard. Like a thing of light, the shining weapon darted here and there, claiming with each touch its tithe of blood.

"The leader of the redskins, a hideously painted buck, seeing the rescuers near at hand, made a sudden feint and, dropping upon one knee, attempted to stab the boy through the abdomen. It was his last stroke, for as Sammy sprang back his blade whirled downward, the savage hand dropped to the earth, lopped clean at the wrist as with an ax, and the next instant a life went out through an ugly gash in the dusky throat. Louder rose that rhythmic chant, while ever, as some thin flame, the slender blade played swiftly about the swordsman.

"Reynolds struggled to rise, but was too badly hurt, and sank back beside the prostrate trooper. Never pausing in his song, Sammy stepped in front of his fallen friend, and as the steel told on its fateful tale, high up above the din of strife the sonorous words rang out:

"'Heed me, oh mighty ones, my fathers of the past! The spirit lives within thy son! See! the arm is strong, the hand is sure, and with each stroke the life wine flows! To the sacred annals of our house I add another deed. Hail to ye, oh mighty dead! Hail! heroes of Yamato's line!'

"Swiftly and more deadly flamed that gleaming brand, as Sammy, seemingly

endowed with more than human strength, now took the offensive and pressing into the struggling band, made a sudden, swinging side-cut which swept a head completely from its moorings, then plunged a foot of steel into another naked breast.

"It was more than the Tontos could stand, and they gave way before the Jap's sudden onslaught, taking refuge behind the rocks. A dozen troopers were now in action, their fire soon causing the Indians to scatter like quail along the rocky ridge, where it would have been foolhardy to pursue.

"As the Indians fled Sammy dropped his dripping point, and turning, ran back to Reynolds, and was in the act of lifting him when an Indian, who had paused in his flight, rested his rifle barrel upon a boulder, and, taking deliberate aim, shot the Jap through the body. The little fellow pitched forward and lay so motionless we thought him dead; but as the boys tenderly lifted and turned him he smiled faintly, as he said, 'Me all right; help Meester Reynolds.' Then the mercy of unconsciousness came to him, and he lay white and still as one whose earthly cares were at an end.

"It was the wickedest little fight I've ever seen; five troopers were dead and three were desperately wounded, while there were eighteen good Indians to balance the account, seven of them Sam-

my's. But the woman and her babies were safe, so the sacrifice had not been wholly in vain.

"The surgeon shortly reached the scene and hurriedly examined the wounded men. To my look of inquiry, he replied, 'Reynolds and the other man will pull through, but Sammy is booked, spine broken.' From the troopers gathered close about came a half-suppressed sob, which told, more eloquently than words, how the lad had won them.

"Throwing out a strong picket, I made quick preparations for the night. Within an hour the remainder of the command had struggled in, the Colonel's wife and children were housed in the ambulance, supper was cooked, then the stillness and the grandeur of an Arizona night was upon that blood-stained bivouac.

"Reynolds, his head bandaged and the long cut in his side dressed and stitched, slept fitfully, muttering incoherently of unknown people and places. For Sammy, nothing could be done; his hurt was mortal, and within a few hours the great Silence, the Nirvana of his faith, would be his. Presently the moon came swinging up into the cloudless, starlit sky, driving back the shadows, toning the rough outlines of the rocks, and making beautiful the rugged amphitheater about the spring. By ten o'clock it was as light as at early dawn, while the surgeon and I sat beside the now conscious

boy as he lay upon the rough blanket bed.

"'Sammy,' I said, as I took his hand, 'you are badly wounded and it may be that you will not again return to your people. Will you tell me of your home, and will you give me some message for those who are dear to you?'

"There was wondrous strength in the grip he gave my hand, and his voice was steady as, in halting, uncertain English, he told me of his birthplace in far-away Japan, his beautiful Japan that he would never see again; of his father, the 'grand man' who had sent him out into the world that he might learn the ways of the 'Merican Soldier,' and thus be of greater service to his country in some day of need. He told us of the great palace upon a hill, which had been his home, and spoke reverently of the little mother who waited for his return. He was most anxious that his father should know he had fallen in battle, and that many men had felt his steel before he went down.

"'Me Samurai,' he added, simply; 'it is good that Samurai should die in those fight.'

"Reynolds, unconscious and feverishly moaning, lay a few feet distant, and Sammy asked that he be moved so that he might lie beside his friend. Just beside his bed the moonlight showed a tiny desert flower, a flower not born to blush unseen, but destined, thank God, to

brighten the dying hour of that home-hungry little Japanese. He plucked the flower, and lifting it to his lips, he said, 'Many flowers in my countree.' After this he lay very still, gazing steadily up into the limitless, jeweled space, as if trying to fathom the eternal mystery of life and death. It was nearly midnight when I noticed that his hands were growing cold, and found that the respiration was growing very labored. The surgeon, after feeling the pulse, beckoned me aside to whisper that the hour was come.

"As we bent over him, his eyes sought mine and he said, haltingly, 'Captaine and that doctor man are been verre good to Sammy.' Turning his head, he noticed that the blanket had fallen away from his comrade's shoulder; with great effort he reached out, and pulling the blanket in place, patted the shoulder lovingly, and laid the desert flower upon Reynolds' breast. 'Him my friend,' he whispered; 'him Samurai, too; him 'Merican Samurai.' For a few minutes his pulse fluttered intermittently, when I saw that his lips were moving, and bending low, I caught the faintly murmured words, 'Nippon! Nippon! Samurai!' Then the brave heart was still forever, and we knew that a gallant soul had passed.

"So died a Samurai; giving his young life in defense of the helpless ones of an alien people, a people who regarded him and his kind as pagans. Surely, in the

final muster, the Great Commander, making no distinction as to race or creed, will reward soldiers such as he.

"It was a sad returning to the home camp. Reynolds, raving in delirium, was conveyed slowly in the ambulance, and it was not until after poor Sammy had been buried that he regained consciousness. A fortnight later he emerged from the hospital, gaunt and haggard, with deep lines on his brow from this last sorrow, for he had loved his little comrade with all the strength of his great nature.

"The men came in a body to request that Sammy should be given a soldier's funeral. The Colonel, who had arrived, and had heard how the boy died, cried like a child as he told the men they should have their wish.

"At sunset we laid him to rest, with full military honors. The salute was fired; then, with tears coursing down his bronzed cheek, the bugler stepped to the head of that lowly grave and sounded taps — the soldier's 'good night.' Sweetly and sadly those mournful cadences floated out over the desert, Troop C's farewell to little Sammy.

"Two days later a message came from Department Headquarters inquiring if one Izo Yamato, a Japanese, was at Huachuca, and if so to extend to him every courtesy, etc., etc., by order of

the War Department. I replied, briefly detailing the history of his death. I also wrote the Japanese consul at San Francisco, telling him all.

"A month slipped by, when an ambulance and escort arrived from Benson. Sammy's father, Count Yamato, a distinguished man of middle age, had come to take the body home. Through an interpreter and Reynolds he heard the story of Sammy's gallant fight and death. He was much moved and, though his eyes were dim with unshed tears, he gravely saluted the Colonel and myself, and declared himself content, since his son had died as befitted a Samurai of his rank.

"Through the interpreter, we told him of the great friendship between his son and Reynolds. It was after a long talk with the Count next day that Reynolds sought the Colonel with a strange request. He explained that, as his three years of service would expire within a month, he desired the Colonel's influence with the Department in securing his immediate discharge. The Count had offered formally to adopt him as his son and, having no ties which bound him to his native land, the Sergeant had accepted. Count Yamato seconded the petition, stating that having lost his only son, his heart had gone out to the gallant young American whom he now desired to make his heir. It was easily arranged, and two

days later they started west with Sammy's remains.

"Within a week or two after I, too, was in San Francisco, ordered to duty at the Presidio. As I crossed the ferry from Oakland, we ran close under the stern of a great Pacific liner bound for the Orient. On the after-deck stood a tall figure, and Sergeant Reynolds' voice came to me across the waters, 'Good-bye and God bless you, Captain.' The Count stood beside him, and I knew that below decks little Sammy's body was going home to sleep beside his fathers. Into the splendor of the sunset which lay beyond the Golden Gate, to the far-off land of flowers, sailed the mighty ship bearing my two Samurai, the living and the dead."

The Colonel paused in his story, and taking from his pocket a letter postmarked Tokio, Japan, May 1, 1904, he read the following extract:

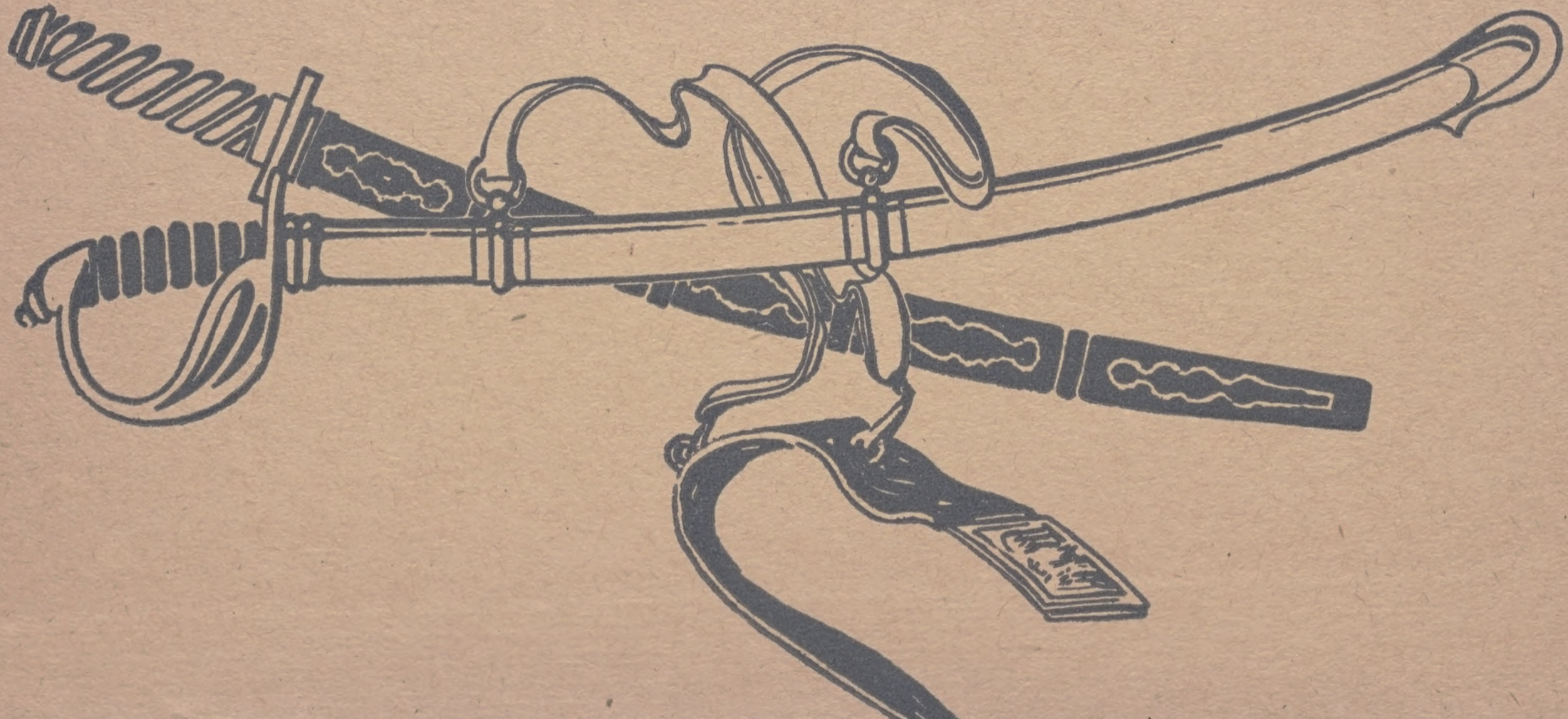
"'As a military man you are, of course, interested in the war. Here in Japan we hear little of events at the front save the official dispatches, with which you are already familiar. Yesterday, however, I witnessed an event of more than passing interest. During the recent desperate fighting between the Japanese torpedo flotilla and the Russian battleships about Port Arthur, a lieutenant-commander of the Japanese navy, in command of a destroyer, made a daring and successful

attack upon one of the enemy's vessels. He was killed in the action, and his body brought home for interment. Never have I seen so splendid a spectacle nor so impressive a service. In attendance were the Emperor and the entire Imperial Court, as well as the highest officers of the Army and Navy, all ablaze with gold lace and jeweled decorations. The body rested upon a magnificent catafalque of purple velvet, bearing the national arms and draped with the battle-flags of his ship. It seems that the officer had been a Samurai, a member of some noble family, and, in recognition of his gallantry in action, a part of the ceremony was the conferring by the Emperor on the dead man of the Order of the Golden Kite, thus marking him as one of Japan's national heroes. After this ceremony was ended, an old, white-haired noble, said to be the dead man's father, took from an attendant a package, which proved to be a silken American flag, with which he reverently covered the casket. Then the crowd slowly filed out, leaving the dead hero alone under the folds of Old Glory. It is said to have been an event unprecedented in the history of Japan, but I could learn little concerning it. Those I asked either didn't know, or wouldn't tell. Strange people, these Japanese.'"

The Colonel folded up the letter and replaced it in his pocket. As he rose to bid us good-night, he said:

"I have since learned that the daring commander who gave his life to Japan, and whose body lay in the old temple, shrouded in the American colors, was Sergeant Reynolds of old Troop C, one of my Two Samurai."

MAR 5 1913



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